

For 9th and 10th graders, the IAB Performance task (How We Learn) is divided into 2 parts. In Part 1, students read 4 sources relating to the topic of multiple intelligences and answer two short response questions. In Part 2, students write a multi-paragraph explanatory article about multiple intelligences.

For 11th graders, the IAC is divided into 2 parts. In Part 1, students answer ??? multiple-choice questions and 3 short answer questions. In Part 2, students read 4 sources relating to the topic of multiple intelligences, answer two short response questions, and write a multi-paragraph explanatory article.

9th, 10th, and 11th graders read the same 4 sources, respond to the same 2 short answer questions, and write the same explanatory article.

We therefore decided to focus on those 3 writing tasks that our 9th, 10th, and 11th graders had in common.

What did we do?

1. Read 4 sources relating to multiple intelligences
2. Read item stem for short answer (62023): “Source #3 describes how Gardner’s multiple intelligence theory challenged ‘a century-old orthodoxy that defined intelligence only as doing well on multiple choice tests.’ Provide two pieces of information from different sources to explain this idea. Cite evidence and identify the source of each piece of information by title or number.”
3. Group discussion: What do you see as challenges for students in the sources and/or item stem?
 - a. Students will likely struggle with reading four long sources on their own
 - b. Students will likely struggle with vocabulary in the sources and item stem
 - c. Students will likely struggle with “unwrapping” (or deconstructing) the item stem.
 - d. Students might be intimidated by the item stem
 - e. We know it was unclear whether or not they needed to explain the information they provided— they asked for clarification during testing.
 - f. Students might misread or interpret “Provide two pieces of information from different sources,” providing a total of four pieces of information— 2 from each different source.
4. Read rubric and condition codes for scoring.
5. Group discussion: “What is the difference between a one and a two?”
 - a. In order to receive a 2 students must have ALL of the following
 - i. 2 pieces of evidence from 2 different sources
 - ii. 2 accurate citations
 - iii. 2 explanations
 - iv. Otherwise they receive a 1
6. Read anchor set— student samples and comments— out loud.
 - a. This clarified what it means “to explain” information.

- i. We determined that to receive points for explanation, students could not merely comment upon the information they chose. Instead they must make a connection: they must explain how Gardner's theory changed (or challenged) the way we define intelligence.
- 7. Read and assign a score to each student sample in check set.
- 8. Share and discuss scoring.
 - a. We were in agreement in all scores assigned! :)
- 9. Read key and comments for check set
- 10. Sign in to CAASPP and access student work.
- 11. Sort work by item.
- 12. Reassign work evenly (so that all teachers have approximately the same amount of responses to grade).
- 13. Hand score student responses to item 62023.

- 1. Read item set for explanatory article
- 2. Read rubric for Organization/Purpose
- 3. Group discussion: "What is the difference between a 2 and 3?"
 - a. Organizational structure is determined by specific elements such as thesis, transitions, introduction, and conclusion.
 - b. Smarter Balanced rubrics are holistic. They reward style and cohesion. It's not enough to have the pieces (thesis, evidence, analysis). Students must put the pieces together in a way that is both logical and lucid.
 - c. So, their writing should not be too formulaic.
 - i. It can be argued that all writing is formulaic. In fact, AP Lang & Comp. emphasizes the importance and prevalence of rhetorical modes, which are, to some degree, formulaic. To what extent, then, are students penalized for "formulaic" writing
 - d. Individual or unique style is now rewarded, where it was previously ignored.
- 4. Read and discuss Evidence/Elaboration rubric and Smarter Balanced definition of Elaboration.
 - a. As we discovered in Item 62023, it is not enough to simply comment upon evidence. Students must "[develop] ideas by providing supporting details." These details can be different in kind— facts, quotations, anecdotes, scenarios, etc.— but must explain and/or connect to the student's evidence.
- 5. Read and discuss Conventions rubric and Conventions Chart for High School.
 - a. The Smarter Balance Conventions Chart divides Conventions into 5 categories: Spelling, Capitalization, Punctuation, Grammar Usage, and Sentence Completion.
 - b. The Conventions Rubric also includes a holistic scoring guide that account for the variety, severity, and density of errors in student writing.
 - c. We noticed that the Conventions are graded on a 2-point (rather than a 4-point) rubric, and subsequently asked, "Do students receive three separate scores: one for Organization/Purpose, one for Evidence/Elaboration, and one for Conventions?"

6. Read and discussed anchor set— student samples and comments.
 - a. Students *do* receive three separate scores.
 - b. Surprisingly, comments for high scoring essays did not offer high praise for thesis, evidence, and elaboration but instead addressed potential problems:
 - i. The first sample was persuasive (rather than explanatory) in mode.
 - ii. The second relied on formulaic (rather than authentic) transitions.
7. Paired up to hand score Item 62027.
 - i. Discussed student writing with a peer to determine accurate scores.

What setbacks or challenges did we face?

1. When hand scoring, student response page was often blank
 - a. This seemed to occur only when accessing student work via Firefox. (Teachers using Explorer and Chrome did not experience this problem).
2. Some teachers had trouble signing into the CAASPP website and therefore could not retrieve student work.
3. It was not always apparent whether or not assigned scores were saved— we lost time navigating back and forth to make sure we didn't lose scores.
4. After scoring work, we had to mark it as complete. We lost time navigating back and forth looking for “tentatively graded” work.
5. It was difficult to distribute grading evenly to teachers because not all students tested with their teacher (or in a session created by their teacher).
 - a. Ms. Rech needed to reassign students tested by out of class personnel before teachers could reassign work to evenly distribute grading.
7. Error in Check Set for Item 62027 (Essay) prevented blind scoring which impeded our ability to accurately and confidently score essays.

DEBRIEF

1. Test Administration Issues

- a. Students, esp. 9th and 10th grade students, did not have enough time to finish the essay
 - i. Compare progress of 11th graders who had a set period of time to work all at one time versus 9th and 10th who had separated chunks of time over different days.
- b. Were students able to have scratch paper
- c. Teaching students how to take notes & highlight.
- d. Itunes opening kicked them off.
- e. Special education students needed perhaps more accommodations—smaller testing environment? They needed much more time. Accommodations were on the screens, but not in the classroom.
- f. What to do with students who were disruptive to those who want to try?
- g. Sounds like we need block scheduling for the days we are testing.
- h. More practice with typing and computer use for students is necessary.
- i. Grading takes a long time (2 short responses; 3 scores per essay) and the criteria and standards for grading are different and new
- j. Problems with scoring—seeing student answers

2. Teacher Takeaways

- a. Skills we need to emphasize/look at how to teach.
- b. Grammar Conventions—use as blueprint for what is being stressed on the test that hasn't been stressed as much in past (used to be more looking at "errors did not interfere with understanding" or not).
- c. Teach students what elaboration is—perhaps develop some Graphic Organizers (reference page 10(?) of our rubric set)
- d. How to read like good readers and read large quantities of text quickly.
- e. Teach transitions
- f. How to cite accurately

3. Testing Experience

- a. Can we scaffold the testing experience somehow for the essay in lower grades? We need a Sequence or Progression of a testing experience from 9th to 11th grade. Teaching 9th graders through the test might be more beneficial than having them drown.
 - i. Will students be re-taking this same essay next year (if they were 9th and 10th graders this year?). Can we develop our own materials or use other Smarter Balanced materials?